Sent to:

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher

President Mitterrand

Prime Minister of France

Mayor of Paris

Amnesty International

International Commission of Jurists

Lord Avebury

International Federation for the Rights of Man (Paris)

Arab Organisation for Human Rights

United Nations Centre for Human Rights

Miss Caroline Moorehead (journalist - 'Prisoners of Conscience' column)

مجلس اسلامی
Islamic Council

14 May 1990

Professor Moncef Ben Salem, the founder of the Mathematics Department of the University of Sfax, Tunisia, was arrested on 22 April 1990 as a result of an article he wrote which appeared in an Algerian newspaper on 19 April. In this article he deplored the violations of human rights in Tunisia. He wrote that he had witnessed the death of Mohamed Elmansouri under torture, and named other victims.

Professor Ben Salem also gave examples of the oppressive dictatorship of Ben Ali's regime: the rigging of the elections in April 1989; the widespread power of the secret police; the banning of political movements; the constant harassment of anyone suspected of holding differing views from the government.

Professor Ben Salem was imprisoned from 1987 to 1989 on political grounds and without trial. He was released after international pressure, but has not been allowed to resume his teaching, or draw his salary, and his passport has been confiscated. He is now due to stand trial on 24 May, charged with criticising the president and with the 'spread of false information' (his writing of the torture cases he witnessed). He could face imprisonment of 8 years.

We appeal to you to use your utmost influence to intercede with President Ben Ali for the unconditional release of Professor Ben Salem.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Salem Azzam

Salem Azzam
Secretary General

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